

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 126

By Crider

A RESOLUTION to congratulate the family of Mr. Richard Lee Welch upon his posthumous induction into the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those citizens and educators who, through unwavering dedication and unflagging commitment to excellence, distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person was Richard Lee Welch, who devoted more than thirty-five (35) years of his life to the education and instruction of young students and athletes; on March 17, 2007, Mr. Welch will be posthumously inducted into the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) Hall of Fame, a most befitting recognition of his outstanding service to Tennessee high schools and athletics; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Mr. Welch began his career serving as principal and coach of girls' and boys' basketball at Westview Elementary School in Cedar Grove, while there, his teams won a total of forty-three (43) trophies; and

WHEREAS, from 1966 to 1978, Mr. Welch coached the girls' basketball team at Trezevant High School; during this time, his teams won nine District and nine Regional Tournaments, reached the State Tournament nine times, won the State Tournament Championships in 1974 and 1976, and reached the Final Four of the State Tournament four times; and

WHEREAS, from 1978 to 1982, Mr. Welch continued to enrich the lives of young athletes by conducting basketball camps for area teams while working at the Carroll County Civic Center; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Welch went on to teach and coach for Atwood High School and then West Carroll High School; at West Carroll, his girls' basketball team won four District Championships, played in the Regional Tournament six times, won a total of 33 Team Trophies, and reached the SubState two years; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the abundant accomplishments of his illustrious career, Mr. Welch coached the West All Stars in Knoxville from 1970 to 1973 and received Coach of the Year nine (9) times; astoundingly, he had an overall winning record of 81 percent of the 1,488 total games he coached; and

WHEREAS, even after his retirement, Mr. Welch continued to be the announcer at all home games from 1994 to 1997; he also devoted much time and effort to attending seminars, substituting for sick teachers, and attending all sporting events; many coaches continued to glean from his wisdom and advice even to the very end of his life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Welch not only coached his students, but served as their history and social studies teacher, as well as their mentor; he touched the lives of innumerable young people by sharing life lessons and devoting his heart and soul to their successes, both on and off the court, both inside and outside of the classroom; and

WHEREAS, his professional and academic successes aside, Mr. Welch also found the time to serve with his characteristic dedication as a Methodist minister; and

WHEREAS, on January 3, 2006, Richard Welch passed away; his funeral saw hour after hour of former players, coaches, family, friends, and admirers filing past his coffin to say goodbye to their hero; and

WHEREAS, a pillar of the Carroll County community, Mr. Welch was supported by his loving wife, Betty, throughout his celebrated career; he is survived by Betty, his daughter, Teresa Wall and her husband, Johnny, and his granddaughter, Bethany Wall; and

WHEREAS, for the above accomplishments, his impeccable moral standards, and impressive work ethic, Mr. Richard Lee Welch has been selected for induction into the TSSAA Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Welch, as a man of true character and commitment, exemplified the type of selfless community servant and civic leader whom fellow Tennesseans admire for their tireless efforts in molding the State's youth, guiding them with solid principles and high standards in every aspect of their lives; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby join with the family, friends, and colleagues of Mr. Richard Lee Welch in celebrating his posthumous induction into the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Hall of Fame, commend Mr. Welch's substantial legacy as a teacher, coach, and administrator for Tennessee education, and honor the memory of his loving dedication to his family, his students, his community, and our State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.